COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5131.91P
STUDENTS

HAZING (NEW)

(Trumbull Public Schools / Newtown Public Schools)

Second Reading 4/20/22

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment that is free from hazing for students and staff. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the Colchester School District and are prohibited at all times.

Any student who engages in hazing is subject to discipline up to and including expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials. Any board employee who permits hazing is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

General Statement of Policy

A. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee or agent of the school district (here and after collectively referred to as "staff") shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.

B. No staff member of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing.

C. Implied or expressed consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy, and will not be considered as a defense or mitigation of any alleged violation of this policy.

D. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to initiate another person or to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.

E. The school district will investigate complaints of hazing and take appropriate action including but not limited to discipline against any student or staff member of the district who is found to have violated this policy.

F. Hazing activities are seriously disruptive of the education process. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during, before or after school hours.

Definitions

A. "Hazing" is defined as committing an act that endangers the mental or physical health and safety of a person for the purpose of 1) initiation or admission into, or 2) affiliation with or continued membership or affiliation with, a student organization, any organization sanctioned or authorized by the Board of Education, or for any other purpose. The term "hazing" includes, but is not limited to:

    1. Any type of physical brutality including but not limited to whipping, beating, striking, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to elements, electronic shocking, or requiring an ingestion or placing a harmful substance in or on the body, or any other forced physical activity which would adversely affect the physical health or safety of an individual.

    2. Any activity, except those activities authorized by law, which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.

Any hazing activity upon which the initiation into, admission into or affiliation with, or condition for continued membership in, an organization sanctioned or authorized by the Board of Education is conditioned, directly or indirectly, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if the student willingly participates in such activity.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 53-23a

POLICY ADOPTED:

5131.91R
STUDENTS

HAZING

I. Definitions

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1. Any type of physical brutality including but not limited to whipping, beating, striking, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to elements, electronic shocking, or requiring an ingestion or placing a harmful substance in or on the body, or any other forced physical activity which would adversely affect the physical health or safety of an individual;

2. Any activity, except those activities authorized by law, which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual;

3. Requiring indecent exposure of the body;

4. Confinement of the person to unreasonably small, unventilated, unsanitary, unlighted, or restricted areas;

5. Requiring the ingestion of any substance or any other physical activity which could adversely affect the health or safety of the individual;

6. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental or physical health or dignity of the student, or discourages the student from remaining in school or in the organization; and/or

7. Any activity that causes or requires the individual to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of Board policies or regulations.

II. Reporting Procedures

A. Any person who believes he/she has been the victim of hazing, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing, shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate Colchester Public Schools employee designated by this policy.

B. The building principal is the person responsible for receiving reports of hazing at the building level. Any person may report hazing directly to the Superintendent.

C. Teachers, coaches, athletic directors, administrators, volunteers, contractors, and other employees of the school district shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events which might include hazing. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall inform the building principal or Superintendent immediately.

D. Submission of a good-faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the reporter's or potential victim's future grades, activity participation, employment, or work assignments.

III. Investigation Procedure

A. All reports of hazing will be investigated by the school principal, Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. During the investigation, steps should be taken, when necessary, to protect the reporter, potential victim, and/or others. The Superintendent may authorize a third-party investigation instead of, or in addition to the school administration's investigation.

B. A written report on the investigation and its results will be submitted to the Superintendent unless conducted by the Superintendent. Where potential violations of criminal law may have occurred, the principal, Superintendent's designee, or Superintendent shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

C. Students or employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension and expulsion for students and termination for employees. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior.

IV. Reprisal

Colchester Public Schools will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, coach, athletic director, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the District who retaliates against any person who makes a good-faith report of alleged hazing or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation

includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

V. Dissemination of Policy

This policy, in its entirety, must be published in each school's student handbook. It is the responsibility of the lead advisor/coach for each school club, organization, or athletic team to explain this policy to all student and adult participants on a regular basis, including, at minimum, when the club, organization, or athletic team begins its work each year or season.